

## FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**



Brothers and Sisters in Christ; Grace and peace!

I am grateful to all those who were able to be present for the town hall meeting for “The Greater Mission.” We await their final reports. As we enter Church today and pick up our blessed palms, our encounter with Holy Week thus begins. Today’s liturgy honors the tragedy and the triumph of our Lord’s Passion as He moves towards the Cross; those clashing moments of heightened glory and suffering – the royal welcome but subsequent trial culminating in his crucifixion. This is a week that we interiorly contemplate the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for humanity. What a grace if each of us would identify an area requiring extra sacrifice this week.!

Both of our First and Second Readings bring such tenderness and poignancy that open our hearts to the Passion narrative. We listen with an inner ear as the prophet Isaiah describes the suffering Servant of Yahweh, the life and mission of Jesus foreshadowed. The profound Christological hymn evoked by St. Paul, Christ’s humiliation and then exaltation, issues an invitation to imitate the holy meekness and love of our Lord.

The first part of St. Mark’s Passion narrative describes the royal reception which Jesus receives from the Jews as they process with him the two miles from the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem. With agonizing hearts, we are challenged to examine our own lives through Peter who denies Jesus, Judas who betrays Jesus, Pilate who disregards his conscience, Herod who mocks Jesus, and those Jewish leaders trying to protect their ranks by getting rid of Jesus.

**As we begin Holy Week today, I propose five areas for self-examination:**

- 1) Does Jesus weep over my sinful soul as he wept over Jerusalem?
- 2) Am I as God expects me to be, producing fruits of holiness, purity, justice, humility, obedience, charity, and forgiveness; or am I continuing to produce bitter fruits of injustice, pride, racism, hatred, jealousy, indifference, and selfishness?
- 3) Do I welcome Jesus into my heart humbly each time I receive him in the Holy Eucharist, or will Jesus have to cleanse my heart with his whip?
- 4) Am I ready to surrender my life to him during this Holy Week, walking with him all the way throughout the observances of this week, not merely showing up for Easter Sunday?
- 5) Finally, can we be the meek donkey that carried Jesus?

I invite all to carry and radiate Jesus’ universal love, unconditional forgiveness, and sacrificial service to your families and communities. At 7pm this Monday the Chrism Mass is celebrated at the Cathedral: all are welcome to attend. Moreover I want to invite all of you to participate in the **Easter Triduum** which begins Holy Thursday through Holy Saturday night when the Church celebrates the **Resurrection** of Our Lord. “When we contemplate the sufferings of Jesus, He grants us, according to the measure of our faith, the grace to practice the virtues He revealed during those sacred hours.” – **St. Angela Merici**.

Blessings for a prayerful Holy Week!